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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

WEDNESDAY, August 9, 1933

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Department of Agriculture

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Subject: "Making the Most of Garden Snap Beans." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Last week we sang the praise of the tomato, as one of our best--if not our very best, economy vegetable. We praised it for its food value, especially its minerals and vitamin C. We praised it for its flavor and attractive color. We praised it because it is the easiest of all vegetables to can and because it keeps its important food value even when it's canned or cooked. We praised it because it is easy to grow and inexpensive to buy in season. And we praised it because of its many uses, raw and cooked.

Today we'd better tune up again for another garden vegetable that deserves our song of praise. This is the green snap bean. It lines up along with tomatoes as an economy vegetable.

Did you ever notice the way we human beings have of taking our good and faithful friends for granted, of just depending on them as a matter of course? Well, that's the way a lot of us do with tomatoes and beans. We don't appreciate them as they deserve. And we don't make the most of them. I was brought up to eat "string" beans or "pole" beans just because they were cheap and the garden was full of them. I'm glad to say that garden beans have graduated from that name "string" beans. They don't have strings anymore-- the good varieties. And they're green and crisp enough to snap when you break them in pieces. They deserve a place on our dinner tables not only because they are cheap and plentiful, but because they're rich in food value and flavor. If you cook these beans properly, they'll be as delicious as any vegetable in the garden.

Snap beans are an unusual vegetable because we eat their green pods as well as their seeds. So they belong in the class with other green vegetables for vitamins and minerals, and they also belong in the class of legumes for the protein and starch in the bean itself.

Some people serve snap beans day in and day out the same old way. Some people never eat these good beans in any other way than boiled and seasoned with butter or pork fat. That's not making the most of these good vegetable friends. Too bad to be monotonous about a food that you can serve in such a variety of ways.

Did you ever try pork and beans summer style? There's a nice way of cooking the very young and tender beans. You pan them in a heavy skillet with a little butter or meat drippings. And then, the last five minutes of cooking, you season them with shredded cooked pork. Did you ever try snap beans au gratin? Put cooked beans in a baking dish with white sauce and sprinkle them with buttered bread crumbs and grated cheese. Bake them in a moderate oven until the sauce bubbles and the crumbs brown.

Maybe you're especially interested in keeping the green color in beans. Color certainly adds to their appetite appeal. Well, try a quick cooking method to hold the color. Cut the beans in small pieces. Drop them into a small quantity of salted water. Leave the lid off the kettle. Cook twenty to thirty minutes--or until the beans are just tender. Then drain and season them with salt, pepper, and melted butter or other fat. Still another way to save the green color is to cook the beans in milk instead of water. With milk you need low heat, below the boiling point. You simmer the beans gently in the milk until they are tender. Then you season and thicken the milk for sauce. This is a good way of saving food value. None gets lost with the cooking liquid.

Cold, left-over, cooked beans are excellent in salad. In potato salad they add green color and variety in flavor. The same is true of a combination vegetable salad or a mixed vegetable salad bowl.

By the way, for variety in appearance, cook your beans sometimes whole, sometimes cut crosswise, sometimes cut lengthwise. For an au gratin dish or for a salad bowl, cut-up or shredded beans are best. For a decorative salad plate, the long whole beans are most attractive.

We haven't planned a vegetable plate for luncheon or dinner for some time, have we? And with all the fresh things in the garden these days we ought to feature vegetable meals often. Well, let's make up for it today. Let's have a vegetable plate dinner-- the kind that looks delicious and tastes as good as it looks. The menu: Shredded snap beans and fresh pork on toast; Creamed onions; Sliced cold tomatoes with French dressing. For dessert, let's have layer cake with an iced fruit drink. A berry punch would fit in nicely with that meal. So would a lemon mint drink.

By the way, one way of making an all-vegetable plate successful is to use variety in color and flavor in your vegetables. Too much sameness doesn't wake up appetites as contrast does. Please notice that this plate featured green beans, white onions and red tomatoes. Please notice also that the flavors included such distinctive tastes as those of tomatoes, onions and bacon or salt pork, as well as of the milder flavored snap beans.

Now if you'll find a pencil and a paper, I'll give you exact directions for that economy garden dish --pork and beans, summer style.

2 tablespoons butter or meat drippings	1 teaspoon salt
1 quart shredded snap beans--young & tender	1 pint shredded cooked pork

Once more. (Repeat.)

Melt the fat in a heavy skillet. Add the beans and salt. Cover, and cook for 20 to 25 minutes, turning the beans frequently. Add the pork. Stir until well mixed with the beans, and cook for about 5 minutes longer, until the meat is thoroughly heated. Serve on buttered toast. You always need young and tender beans for this method of cooking.

Tomorrow:

